

READ, Walter Pyrimus, a prominent business man of Salt Lake City, is the son of Samuel George Read and Elizabeth Georgian Quilly, and was born in London, England, Aug. 8, 1848; he lived in that country until he



was eight years old. His father was a native of London, England, and was employed as a lieutenant in the service of the East India Company; later he was employed in the office of the general mercantile department of the docks of that company in London. He married Elizabeth Georgian Quilly (a native of England), and became a member of the LDS Church. *DS Biogr Encycl Vol 12: 494*

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ing converted to "Mormonism" he was baptized together with his wife and left England for America in 1856 with his whole family. On their arrival in Iowa the family commenced the journey toward the Rocky Mountains in Capt. Edward Martin's handcart company, but when the company reached Keg Creek, a few miles east of Council Bluffs, Iowa, the boy Walter P. (the subject of this sketch) was induced by two men (who had invited him to take a ride with them) to leave the company, promising him that if he would stay with them until he was twenty-one years of age, they would give him a large farm and a pony of his own. The boy became delighted at this unexpected opportunity and ran away from the camp. He was first taken to a small town called Ienleston, about fifty miles east of Council Bluffs, where he stayed with a family by the name of Hodge; later he lived with a family named Spoor, and still later made his home with a Dr. Williams, who resided a few miles east of Council Bluffs. Walter's disappearance caused a division of the Read family in 1856. The mother and two daughters went forward to the Valley in Capt. Edward Martin's handcart company, while Bro. Read and his eldest son (Samuel M) remained behind to look for the lost child. They succeeded in finding him after searching two or three months, but it was then too late in the season to cross the plains. In the meantime Mrs. Read returned to Iowa with one of her daughters, and the family then remained together in Iowa till 1859, when the father went to Utah and the mother, with her daughter and her son Walter P. (who had been lost), came to the Valley in 1861, crossing the plains in Capt. Ansel P. Harmon's oxtrain. Walter P. drove a team all the way across the plains. Upon his arrival in Salt Lake City, in 1859, the father

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secured employment as a bookkeeper in the office of the "Deseret News", where he remained until he established himself in business, dealing in books and newspapers under the firm name of "The London Newsdealer". He continued a faithful member of the Church until the time of his death in Salt Lake City, Dec. 8, 1893. Walter P. Read received his early education in private schools in Salt Lake City, but as he desired to gain his own livelihood and be independent, he soon started on his business career. At the age of sixteen he entered the harness business and remained in that vocation for the ensuing sixteen years. The first six years of this period he was an employee, and throughout the latter ten years owned and controlled the business located at Nephi. Upon the sale of his harness business, he devoted himself to railroad building and in the fall of 1879, in connection with Messrs. Grover and McCune, formed a construction company known as the Juab Contract Company which in that year successfully undertook and completed the building of the railroad line on the San Juan river, Colorado. In the spring of 1880 the firm went to Gunnison county, Colorado, and there constructed thirty miles of the South Park Railroad. This firm was known as Grover, McCune and Read and secured the contract for the Union Pacific Railroad, and also contracted for and successfully completed ninety miles of the road from Pueblo north on the Denver and New Orleans, now known as the Denver and Fort Worth Railroad. This firm operated extensively in the Western States, and secured a contract in Montana to haul wood to the Lexington Mills at Butte City from the low lands. In addition to the extensive interests of this successful firm, Mr. Read found opportunities for the exercise of his abilities in other fields, and in 1881 he became interested in stock

raising. In that year he formed a partnership with Messrs. Alfred W. McCune and Thos. J. Scofield and engaged in the cattle business. This partnership owns an extensive stock-ranch in southern Utah comprising about six thousand acres stocked with upwards of seven hundred head of horses and cattle. The same industry and ability which he displayed in his former enterprises has made this ranch one of the most prosperous in Utah. In 1885 Mr. Read again turned his attention to railroad building, and in Montana the firm of McCune, Kerkendall and Co. was formed in Helena. The extensive operations of this firm were managed by Mr. Read who had entire charge of its business in Montana. From railroad building he turned his attention in a few years to merchandising and entered into a partnership at Nephi for the purpose of conducting a general merchandise business, the firm being known as Read & Bryan. Here he remained until 1889, when he moved to Salt Lake City and took up the management of the Salt Lake City Railroad Company. When Mr. Read took up the management of this property it was a poorly equipped crude system. The cars were hauled by mule teams and the tracks extended but an inconsiderable distance. After his incumbency of the office of general manager the system made wonderful strides, both in efficiency and prosperity. Under his direction mule power was superseded by electricity and in Salt Lake City, vice-president and director of electric street cars west of Omaha. He filled the offices of superintendent, vice-president and director of this company from 1889 to 1901. The amalgamation of the Rapid Transit Company and the Salt Lake City Railroad Company was effected in 1901 under the name of the Consolidated Railway and Power Company, and after the consolidation with the Utah Light and Power Company Mr. Read

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became a director and superintendent of the railway service. He filled these positions until the purchase of the Utah Light and Railway Company by the Harriman system took place. In 1872 Mr. Read married Miss Martha A. Pond, daughter of Stillman and Elizabeth Pond, and his family consists of eight children, five sons and three daughters. His sons are Stillman George (dying at the age of two years), Walter E., Joseph Marion, Winslow and Lewis Edgar. His daughters are Gertrude (wife of Fred Michelson), Martha J. and Erma. Notwithstanding his varied and active business career, Mr. Read found time to take an active part in the political affairs of the State. He is a believer in the principles of the Democratic party and in 1876 was elected and served as sheriff of Juab county, Utah. He also had the honor of being the first city marshal of Nephi, being elected to that office in the spring of 1889, but owing to his removal to Salt Lake City to take up the management of the Salt Lake City Railroad, he resigned his office in that year. The success of all the business enterprises in which Mr. Read has been interested and the strikingly successful career he has made in Utah are the results of his own efforts. Starting out in life at an age when most boys are still under parental guidance, self instructed and self-made, he has achieved results that mark him as one of the great captains in the industrial development of the West. A man of splendid physique, undaunted will power, coupled with the ability to learn from others and profit by their experience, no matter how limited, has made his career one of the most striking illustrations of what energy, application and industry can accomplish. Gifted with a pleasing personality and a kind and genial manner, he has become one of the best known and most popular men in the Great West.